

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A *shochu* manufacturing method that consists of the following steps:

(a) cultivating *koji* mold (*Aspergillus oryzae*) upon and into steamed rice;

5 (b) making starter mash by keeping a first mixture, which consists of said *koji* mold, yeast seeds, and water that contains 300 mg/kg–1,000 mg/kg of hydrogen carbonate ions, at 20 °C–35 °C for 1 day–4 days;

(c) making mash by fermenting a second mixture, which consists of said starter mash, one or more steamed vegetables, and additional water containing 300 mg/kg–1,000 mg/kg  
10 of hydrogen carbonate ions;

(d) filtrating said mash in order to separate its solid and liquid parts; and

(e) distilling said liquid.

2. *Shochu* according to Claim 1, but wherein said vegetable(s) is/are selected from a group that consists of rice, wheat, millet, corn, sweet potatoes, potatoes, and buckwheat, or is any  
15 combination thereof.

3. *Shochu* according to Claim 1, but wherein milk is added to said second mixture as a part of or instead of the water containing 300 mg/kg–1,000 mg/kg of hydrogen carbonate ions.

4. *Shochu* according to Claim 3, but wherein said milk is selected from a group consisting of cow milk, goat milk, ewe milk, or is any combination thereof.

20 5. *Shochu* according to Claim 3, but wherein the amount of said milk is less than 1.5 times the weight of the total amount of water added to said first mixture and said second mixture.